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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

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1. Seagoing merchant shipping in the port of Riga is very limited, as its personnel consists mostly of Russians; and only a few of the old Latvian masters and officers are still in service. New personnel for merchant shipping is trained by the Riga navigation schools. Most of the pupils are Russians. The only exception is the Mangalu Shipping School in Riga Milgravis, where most of the teachers and pupils are Latvians. However, they are only being trained for the river and fishing fleets. There are courses for captains for ships up to 200 tons, as well as courses on steam engines for third class mechanics; other courses, which last for two months, are held for firemen and seamen.
2. The total number of ships belonging to the Latvian State Steamship Company is not available, but it is known that the following vessels belong to the company: JANIS RAINIS, ANRI BARBYUS, VENTA, ARETUSA, GENERAL BAGRAMYAN, AKADEMIK PAVLOV, DAUGAVA, TURAYDA, SMOLENSK, and the tugs PROMETEYS and PROMOR. The SS GENERAL BAGRAMYAN carries mostly coal, while the SS SMOLENSK often sails to polar ports. Latvians on these ships are, for the most part, members of the Communist Party and of the Komsomol, and occasionally even Deputies to various Soviets. In any case, the authorities make certain that only persons who will not try to desert the ship sail to the West.
3. Traffic on the inland waterways is maintained almost entirely by the old Latvian river ships and tugs; the names of these vessels have been changed and the hulls repainted. Most of the traffic is on the Daugava and Lielupe rivers. The longest stretch is from Riga to Yelgava. The only new building is the harbor passenger station on the south bank in Riga, at the end of Kalnciema iela; on the north bank there is no station and the people have to wait in the open. There are also a few so-called MOSKVICH river boats, which were brought from the USSR. This represents the sum total of the much publicized development of river shipping.

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4. Barges are used to transport wood, bricks from the Kalnciemas Brickyard, and paper from the Sloka Paper Combine. The Daugava, Gauja, and Lielupe rivers are used for floating timber. In the spring of 1952, 114,000 cubic meters of timber were floated down the Lielupe.
5. Riga is the best equipped port in Latvia, and the most modern techniques are employed there. It has grab cranes, portal or gantry cranes, cranes on caterpillars, and mobile cranes, as well as elevators and other mechanical means for unloading ships. Nearly all stevedore work is mechanized. Coal is unloaded by a machine, the S-153, which does the work of 40 men. The destroyed buildings in the port have been rebuilt, and it is now rumored that Riga is the most modern port in the Soviet Union. According to official figures, work in the port has improved considerably. There is lively traffic in the port, mostly with Leningrad. According to official percentage calculations, the work accomplished during the past four years has increased tenfold, but this is believed to be an exaggeration for propaganda purposes.
6. Despite the efforts of the government to improve the living conditions of the dock workers by guaranteeing comparatively good pay, erecting several blocks of apartments, and establishing clubs and reading rooms, the dock laborers are still resentful and occasionally display their resentment by quarreling and fighting.

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